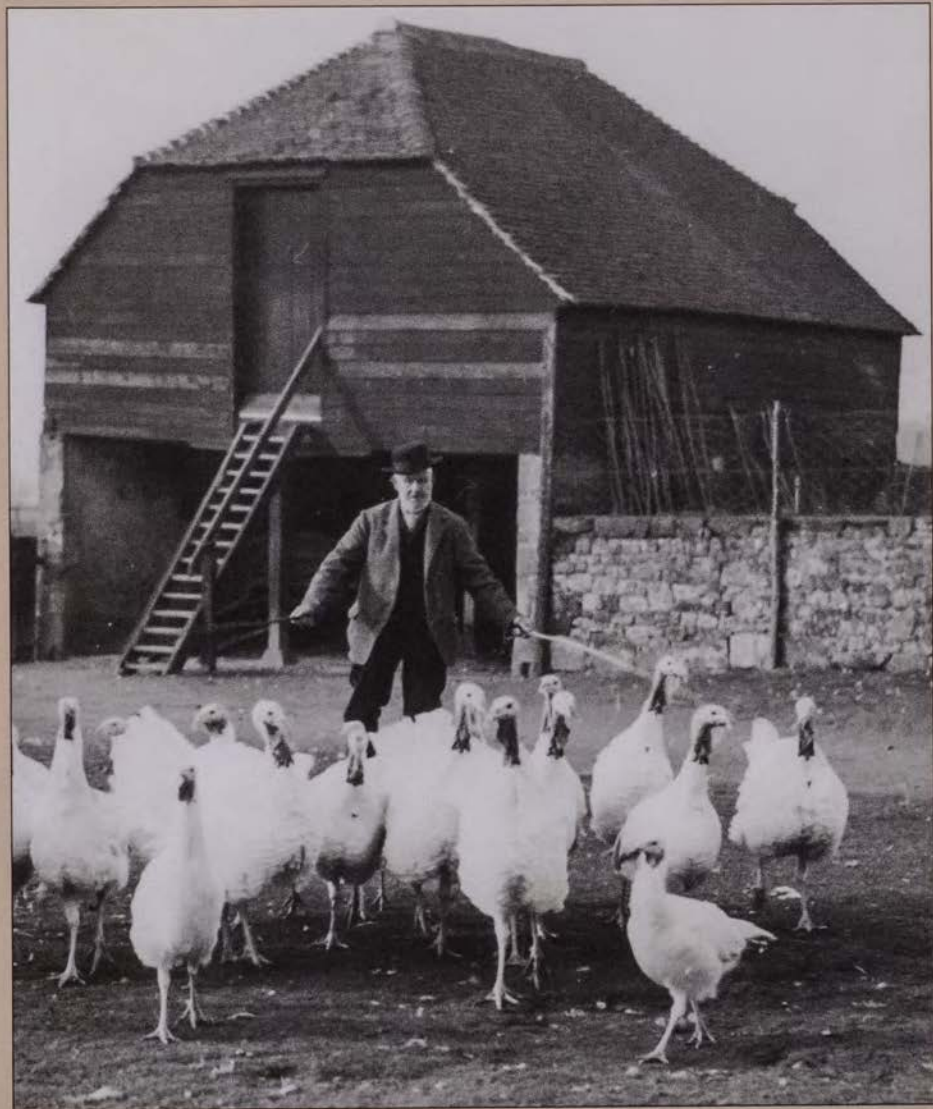


THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

38

No.152, June 2013



THE PETWORTH SOCIETY
magazine

No. 152, June 2013



Apple picking probably at Duncton about 1900. See Wassailing at Duncton.
Photograph courtesy of John Robbins.



PETWORTH SOCIETY ACTIVITIES SHEET

Summer Programme – please keep for reference

This Magazine, now on Issue 152, has been the mainstay of the Society since the 1970s. In that time Petworth has changed out of all recognition but the Society with its Magazine, walks and monthly meetings continues. Over some forty years we have had to rethink and reinvent. Things come and go, priorities change. Think of the Toronto Scottish regiment's visits in the mid-1980s and early 1990s – or the two Apple Days in the early 1990s or the revival of Petworth Fair in 1986. Innovation has to be part of the mix. What of the Society Dinner, now an annual fixture but originally a "one-off" celebration, or the Book Sale, a relative newcomer (2001) and now a major event. Can you imagine second Saturday Petworth without it? Andy and Annette's imaginative excursions have been a feature of recent years and much enjoyed. Sadly no more. Will we continue? It's up to you. Debby has arranged two coach trips this year and the response will determine whether we continue next year. The first is to Saddlescombe just north of Brighton, Leconfield Estate until the 1920s and still retaining the old Leconfield numbering. The farm was in the hands of the Quaker Robinson family for generations and is the subject of Maud Robinson's classic memoir "A Southdown Farm in the Sixties." On a recent visit Debby, Gordon and I loved it. We have arranged a special, exclusive, Society visit in July. Our second visit will be to Firle Place and village in September, details in the September Magazine.

PROGRAMME

Friday 31st May:

Annual General Meeting Neil Sadler: Getting to know the Canals! With Ian's pictorial review of the year.

NB: 7.15pm Free admission.

Apologies for error in March Magazine.

DAVID AND IAN'S WALKS – Third Sunday in month.

Leave Petworth car park at 2.15pm.

Sunday 16th June

Sunday 21st July

Sunday 18th August

Thursday 25th July

Society visit to Saddlescombe – see leaflet.

Society Annual Dinner at Petworth House

Wednesday 4th September

For menu and order form see separate sheet.

**PETWORTH PARK JOINT SPORTS 100 CLUB APPEAL
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

I would like to join the 100 club and pay my annual subscription by the following means which I have ticked. The number of entries is unlimited.

STANDING

ORDER: Form will be sent to you.

CHEQUE: **£60** or half yearly **£30**

Should for any reason the 100 club cease any advance payment will be returned in full.

The £10 donation from the Association will be passed directly on to The Petworth Society.

The monthly draw will normally take place between 10th and 18th of each month.

Winners names will be posted on the notice board in the Square.

The 100 club is registered with the Chichester D.C. under the Gambling Act 2005 Schedule 11 Part 5.

Send your completed application to **V Phillips, 20 Charmandean Road, Worthing, BN14 9LQ.**

Telephone **01903 207436** or Email **vandbphillips@hotmail.co.uk**.

Acknowledgement and your membership will be forwarded to you.

The Petworth Society Book Sale – 2nd Saturday in Every Month

SATURDAY

**June 8
July 13
August 10
September 14
October 12
November 9
December 14**



The
Petworth
Society

**BOOK
SALE
Calendar
2013**

Thank you for supporting the Book Sales

If you wish to donate books we are happy to
collect, or you can drop them in on a Book Sale day

Telephone:
Peter on **01798 342562**
Miles on **01798 343227**

OUTING TO SADDLESCOMBE FARM

On Thursday 25th July we will be visiting historic Saddlecombe Farm and the surrounding small hamlet of Saddlecombe, near Poynings. This was formerly part of the Leconfield Estate, sold in the 1920's but the old Leconfield numbering survives. It is situated in an exceptionally beautiful area of downland, now owned by The National Trust. The manor house and farm buildings are only open to the public twice a year, and group visits are strictly limited, so this is quite a rare opportunity.

The visit will include a 2-hour guided tour of the ancient manor house, farm and gardens. The property has a very varied and fascinating history going back to the Knights Templars. There is a Victorian walled garden and a large range of farm buildings including the poachers' gaol, saw-pit and donkey wheel. There should also be some farm animals and poultry. Morning coffee and light lunches will be available from the Hiker's Rest cafe, details of lunch see below*, price not included in the visit. As the cafe is opening especially for us, please indicate if you would like coffee and/or lunch or will be bringing your own.

We will travel by coach from Petworth, leaving the Sylvia Beaufoy car park by 9.15 a.m., arriving at Saddlecombe by 10.30. The coach will depart from Saddlecombe at 2.15 p.m. arriving back in Petworth by 3.30. The cost of the tour is £5.00 per person for the farm tour. No reductions for National Trust members. The cost of coach travel will be £9.50 per person. Total cost - £14.50 per person.

*Lunch Menu - Root vegetable soup, served with rye and walnut bread
Wholemeal sandwiches (see choices below), all served with a side salad
A mug of Fair Trade tea or coffee

Cost: £8.50 a head

There will also be a range of cakes, individually priced.

Please complete the attached form and return to Debby Stevenson, 3 South Grove, Petworth, GU28 0ED by Friday 21st June. Any queries ring: 01798-343496

I/We would like to visit Saddlecombe on 25th July.

Name Telephone number

Address

Number of people I/We would like morning coffee – Yes / No

I/We would like to buy lunch/es at the Hiker's Rest Cafe (please indicate your choice of sandwiches below)I

My/Our choice of sandwiches is (indicate no. required):-

Honey Roast Ham & Cheddar

Tuna & Mayonnaise

Pesto, Mozzarella & Tomato

I /We will be bringing a packed lunch

I enclose cash/a cheque for £ made payable to Petworth Society

THE PETWORTH SOCIETY

Annual Dinner – 4th September 2013

The Annual Dinner will take place in the Audit Room of Petworth House on **Wednesday 4th September**. As you will know there has been considerable archaeological activity in Petworth Park during the summer, some with a view to locating the site of the old medieval banqueting house. The senior archaeologist Tom Dommett will outline his findings to those attending the dinner, something of a coup for us and clearly something we will not be able to offer in other years. Those wishing to hear the talk should be at Church Lodge by **6.15pm**. Otherwise drinks will be served for everyone at **7.15pm**. The meal is timed for **7.45pm**.

The total cost will be **£21.00**, inclusive of gratuities, pre-dinner wine and elderflower pressé.

As on previous occasions wine may be purchased at the meal.

The menu is as follows:

Main Course

| | |
|--|-----|
| Pan Haggerty (sausage, apple, potato, onion with piquant sauce) | [A] |
| Chicken Tagine with Cous Cous | [B] |
| Steak and Kidney Pie | [C] |
| Shepherdess Pie with seasonal vegetable and pulses and a sweet potato topping (Vegetarian) | [D] |

* * *

Dessert

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Sticky Toffee Pudding | [E] |
| Blackberry Cheesecake | [F] |
| Apple Creme | [G] |

* * *

Coffee

As indicated above, the total cost will be **£21.00**.

Please complete the form below if you wish to attend the dinner. A maximum of 88 can be accommodated and acceptances will be on a 'first come' basis.

I should like to attend the **Annual Dinner** on **4th September 2013**.

My/our Main Course selection is **A** **B** **C** **D**

My/our Dessert selection is **E** **F** **G**

(PLEASE) I should like to bring a guest (maximum 1) and enclose £

Cheques made payable to **The Petworth Society**.

Name(s) (BLOCK LETTERS) _____

Address _____

Telephone Number: _____

Please send this slip and cheque payable to **The Petworth Society** to:
P. Jerome, Trowels, Pound Street, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0DX

No telephone orders, please.

CONTENTS

- 3 Constitution and officers
- 4 Chairman's notes
- 5 Great Britain
- 6 Does it matter?
- 7 Ian and David's West Dean woods walk 24th March
- 8 Cotiniate of quince – the March book sale
- 9 Lavender hanger and thunderbox – April at 346
- 10 Petworth Park Joint Sports Association
- 13 Petworth ambulance
- 14 Fire at Petworth House
- 15 Deborah's arty crossword
- 16 Dora Older's diary (9)
- 17 Selham days (1)
- 19 Three brothers
- 31 Wassailing at Duncton
- 34 Letters from home
- 40 The earlier history of Egdean church
- 44 The Fisher Street gala of 1828
- 48 It takes all sorts

CONSTITUTION AND OFFICERS

The Petworth Society was founded in 1974 'to preserve the character and amenities of the town and parish of Petworth including Byworth; to encourage interest in the history of the district and to foster a community spirit'. It is non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit making.

Membership is open to anyone, irrespective of place of residence who is interested in furthering the objects of the society.

The annual subscription is £10.00, single or double, one magazine delivered. Postal £13.50 overseas £16.50. Further information may be obtained from any of the following.

CHAIRMAN

Mr P.A. Jerrome, MBE, Trowels, Pound Street
Petworth GU28 0DX.
Telephone: (01798) 342562.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr K.C. Thompson, 18 Rothermead, Petworth
GU28 0EW.
Telephone: (01798) 342585.

HON. TREASURER

Mrs Sue Slade, Hungers Corner Farm,
Byworth, Petworth GU28 0HW.
Telephone: (01798) 344629.

COMMITTEE

Mrs Donna Carver, Lord Egremont,
Mrs Carol Finch, Mr Ian Godsmark,
Mr Roger Hanauer, Mrs Celia Lilly,
Mrs Ros Staker, Mrs Deborah Stevenson,
Mrs Patricia Turland, Mrs Linda Wort.

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

Mr Henderson, Mr Miles Costello,
Mr Thompson, Mrs Simmons,
Miss Callingham, Mrs Stevenson,
Mrs Angela Azis, Mr Turland, Mr Boakes
(Petworth), Ray and Valerie Hunt (Byworth),
Mr P. Wadey (Sutton and Bignor), Mr Bellis
(Graffham), Mr Derek Gourd (Tillington and
Upperton), Mr Poole (Fittleworth),
Mr David Burden (Duncton), Mrs Brenda Earney
(Midhurst/Easebourne).

SOCIETY SCRAPBOOK

Mrs Pearl Godsmark.

SOCIETY TOWN CRIER

Mr Mike Hubbard
Telephone: (01798) 343249.

For this magazine on tape please contact
Mr Thompson.

Printed by Bexley Printers Limited, Unit 14,
Hampers Common Industrial Estate, Petworth
Telephone: (01798) 343355.

Published by The Petworth Society which is
registered charity number 268071.

The Petworth Society supports The Leconfield
Hall, Petworth Cottage Museum and The
Coultershaw Beam Pump.

WEBSITE

www.petworthsociety.co.uk

FRONT COVER designed by Jonathan Newdick. It shows Henry Hooker with turkeys at Upperton.
Original photograph by George Garland.

1933

Chairman's notes

I have again fitted in what I can and do include the final extract from Dora Older's diary. Re the Petworth House "noria" in PSM 151 John Robbins calls my attention to an article by Nick Meikle in the magazine Stationary Engine concerning the series of Lenoir engines installed to replace the pony before the coming of mains water. Visiting the site Meikle found no trace of the various Lenoir engines; only "the last power source an electric motor." Weighing some 5 cwt, it was too heavy to be easily moved.

You will see we have an appeal on behalf of Petworth Joint Sports, you will see too that a positive response will be of some financial benefit to the Society. I know that we are beset on every side with good causes but a "Petworth" society has to be interested in anything that will ensure a continuance of sport in Petworth Park.

Steve Boakes has left the committee after a good twenty years service. He will however continue with his Magazine delivery round the town. Sorry as I am to lose him, he has probably earned a rest. He and Di have, since Bill Vincent's time, taken on the onerous quarterly job of sending out the "postals". In Steve's place we have co-opted Donna Carver to represent a rather younger generation and hope she will enjoy working with us.

Please find outing and dinner forms with this Magazine. The Allsorts evening is still to come as I write.

Peter
17th April 2013

Subscriptions for 2013-14 may be sent direct to The Treasurer or left in a sealed envelope clearly marked Petworth Society and handed in at Austens in Market Square. Austens cannot give change or answer queries.

Great Britain

We were looking forward to Rohan McCullough's return with great expectation and we were not disappointed. It was another 'special'. This time, she 'was' Vera Brittain, whose 'Testament of Youth' is an autobiographical account of her experiences in the Great War, 1914-1918.

Rohan likes to set the scene with the stage open to view and subdued lighting in the auditorium. At 7.30, she is hidden in the wings, ready to step out when all is silent. And it is the silence of the audience throughout the performance, indicative of Rohan's exceptional talent to become the character she is portraying, which also impresses.

Of an upper-class family, Vera Brittain 'came out' in 1913 with ambitions of going to Oxford University, very much in opposition to her father's ideas of a woman's place in society. Despite this, she won a scholarship to Somerville, but soon came war and her patriotic decision to join the nursing service VAD – Voluntary Aid Detachment.

Initially not wanting to marry, she fell in love with Roland Leighton and they became engaged. He, friends and Vera's brother, Edward, were keen to enlist and served with distinction, but all were killed in action.

All the horrors of trench warfare, the terrible injuries and scenes of carnage were vividly depicted as Vera's outlook on life underwent fundamental changes as a result of her harrowing experiences.

Her concern for the wounded, who included German prisoners of war, lack of supplies, the overwhelming demands of the work, contrasted with the whinging letters from home. Complaints of butter shortage and the frustration of not being able to find servants with so many on war work, culminated with the insistence of her father that she should return to allay her mother's anxieties.

Edward was killed in July 1918.

This award-winning and thought-provoking presentation was one in which the audience became totally absorbed. An unusually sombre end to our meeting.

KCT

Does it matter?

The photograph below illustrates a point that has concerned me for years. It's a Garland study of children potato digging outside Selham church, on the eastern boundary of Manor Farm. It's 1945. The Garland negatives are safe from physical deterioration thanks to the marvellous diligence, care and attention of the West Sussex Record Office – but what of the living tradition? Roger Comber can annotate this picture but even he is struggling. There are hundreds of similar ones from the 1940s and 1950s. In ten years the picture will have faded further into memory – in twenty it will simply be “children potato picking at Selham.” Does it matter? Should we be doing something about it? We did something like this for the 1920s and 1930s in the five books of Garland photographs but that was over a quarter of a century ago. Should we be doing something now?

P.



L-R

Ronnie Oliver, Sam Oliver, N/K, Ray Longman, Betty Hunt (now Banting), Eddie Ayling (?)
Helen Hoddinott, N/K, Josie Oliver, N/K, Ray Hudson, John Hoddinott, – Newman – sons of the
porter at Selham station.

Ian and David's West Dean woods walk. 24th March

West Dean Woods. Even after more than three decades we're still exploring uncharted territory. A piercing wind and grey skies will deter all but the hardiest, while West Dean is a fair trip via Midhurst and Singleton. Despite the sullen weather, the limited parking available is largely taken. The walk will be uphill and then down and the sunken upward track is heavily churned and very muddy. Ian and David say it's drier than it was on Tuesday: perhaps it's the astringent wind from the north.

Extensive coppicing is evident in the private woods on either side; the lent lilies are late this year but are coming now into golden bloom. David says that last year many of them were blind. As we come toward the top we see one of the great millennium chalk balls, clearly suffering a little and a cousin of the former moonlight path in the Pheasant Copse. This one, exposed to the weather is breaking up; others, seen later, are in more sheltered spots. A rounded knot in a tree has been caused by honeysuckle: it clings so tightly that the tree has grown twistedly round it. Too stout now for walking sticks. It's bitterly cold. Nigel would expect to hear the chiff-chaff; the traditional March 23rd date is already gone. We're near the top of the incline and can hear the distinctive sound of the pines "soughing" in the wind: for a moment it sounds like traffic but there is no road here. Cones litter the path like discarded cigars – the squirrels have been picking out the seeds. Jean thinks the trees may be Sitka spruce. The potential view is lost to the grey mist and we're moving downhill. There will be foxgloves after the bluebell season, but this clearly isn't bluebell territory. Nigel is certain he can hear the rattle of crossbills high above us but there is no sign of them. The woods have a carpet of virid green moss like a miniature fern; it's almost as if the spruce are standing in a meadow. On the Tuesday David and Ian had seen a pair of red kites but the birds are absent today. There are badger tracks across the path as we come down. Houses to the right at the bottom. Is that a peacock on the roof? Surely it's too large and has a swivelling movement – more likely it's a vane or cowl.

P.

Cotiniate of quince . . . the March book sale

Shabby. In pristine condition it might make the £1 table¹. In this state it might not make the Sale at all. It's the author that gives pause. Alice M. Tudor also wrote an attractive history of Fernhurst (1934) so we have a "Sussex" book if at a remove. It's unpretentious enough: simply a gathering of extracts from Gerard's Herbal. Born in 1545, Gerard worked for twenty years at Lord Burleigh's town residence in the Strand, and also at his patron's country house in Essex.

Building on previous authorities Gerard "stamped his own personality on every time-stained page." Alice Tudor readily acknowledges that herbal remedies can sometimes be placebo as much as cure, but, one way or another, we catch perhaps a waft of the fragrance of Master Gerard's Elizabethan garden. We may think too of Grandma's herb garden at Stantons Farm a good three centuries and more on.²

A few examples. The harsh white flowers of stitchwort, drunk with wine and powdered acorn are claimed to guard against pain in the side. Hence the "stitch". At Gerard's birthplace, Nantwich in Cheshire, the pink blooms of Ladies' Smock appear "when the cuckowe doth begin to sing his pleasant notes without stammering." Might the plant's appearance in spring have a similar effect on the human voice? Gerard does not comment. Lettuce sprinkled with salt and laid straightaway on burns and scalds will pre-empt blisters, while the juice of lettuce helps induce sleep. Deadly nightshade has the same property but to excess. The plant, "so furious and deadly", should be kept out of the garden. Onions stamped with salt and applied in sunlight to the head "bringeth again the haire very speedily." We may perhaps be permitted to wonder.

Are the horseradish and the vine incompatible? Certainly the old herbalists thought so. Dioscorides would claim that snapdragon hung about a man will save him from being bewitched. Water pepper, so common in woodland tracks, if rubbed upon a tired jade's back, or laid beneath the saddle, will rejuvenate the most exhausted beast.

Mint may be applied with effect to the stinging of wasps and bees but the common stinging nettle "is known better to some than is desired". The Devil's bit scabious seems to have half its root bitten off. "The superstitious people hold opinion that the Devil for the envy he beareth to mankind bit if off, because it would be otherwise good for many uses." The black seeds of peony, fifteen in number and taken in wine will help those who are troubled with Ephialtes or nightmares – they are also good against "melancholic dreams".

We may close with Master Gerard's recipe for Cotiniate of quinces³:

"Take faire Quinces, pare them, cut them in pieces, and cast away the core, then put into every pound of Quinces a pound of sugar, and to every pound of sugar a pint of water, these must be boiled together over a still fire until they be very soft, then let it be strained or rather rubbed through a hairie sieve which is better, and then set it over the fire to boile again, until it be stiff, and so boxe it up, and as it cooleth put thereto a little rose water, and a few grains of muske, well mingled together, which will give a goodly taste unto the cotiniate."

And the March Book Sale? Not strong in "quality" but very busy – quality does vary month to month.

P.

1. Alice M. Tudor: *A Little Book of Healing Herbs* (Medici Society 1927).

2. PSM 149 (September 2012) pages 35-39.

3. Quince marmalade.

Lavender hanger and thunderbox. April at 346

In the last Magazine we left the Cottage Museum on the penultimate day of the season. Just over five months on and after a long winter, there's a certain symmetry in doing the second day of opening, April 2nd. The wallflowers "stocky, stubby, little plants just the right size" are still there, still waiting, while a tentative forking finds the cottage dahlias dormant but unharmed.

Early April can be quiet but after a slow start we have enough visitors to keep us occupied. First, however, with the fire lit, Jean and I have a look round. Jean sees things that in seventeen years I've never noticed. That card of buttons is for a liberty bodice. They're cloth-covered, stapled into the card and stitched on in black thread. It's like a vivid black full colon. A hexagonal patchwork piece, laboriously sewn together, will be added to a myriad others. A patchwork quilt might be a work of two years or more. Or a lavender hanger in the bedroom, sprigs of lavender tied together with stiff ribbon, stems cut to size, inverted and tied tight with the remaining ribbon.

A season's first, almost apologetic, knock at the door. Grandparents returning. They've been before but some years ago. Seventeen years on, the Museum begins to acquire a certain authority. First to Petworth House, as too our next visitors, but two very young children need to move on fairly quickly. We don't get that many after a trip to the great house. The children are so young I don't feel I can

charge the 50p admission.

The grandparents take the initiative. The carpet beater. What's it for? In truth it looks a little lightweight for any but the lightest work. The copper and the "dolly" – here at least is a word the children can latch on to. The glass washboard. They've seen women in France using a sloping board or even a stone beside a stream. Not any more. A lavoir it would be called. That china jelly or blancmange mould would be plastic now. The conversation shifts briefly from the outside thunderbox to even more primitive arrangements in the Australian outback.

The children's attention is wandering. Time for the parlour and the welcoming range. The grandparents explain the brass bed-warmer with its hot coals. The "music box" is jammed but I disengage it. "Not like an MP3 player." If it means something to the children it means nothing to me. Irons of different sizes for different tasks, frilly collars, ruffs. The high chair, the grandparents are doing the job better than I ever could, never hectoring, always aware of wandering eyes. The children will have a postcard each to put in their scrap-books. Cribbage and rag rug evenings.

They go upstairs to reappear finally for the cellar. "Here's where you kept all the things that were left over – all the bits and pieces that today we'd just throw away." Perhaps the best stewarding days are when you come away knowing more than you did when you started.

P

Petworth Park Joint Sports Association 100 Club Appeal

Petworth Joint Sports Association is a combination of the town's football, cricket and stoolball clubs. The first two go back well into the nineteenth century and Petworth Park is their historic home. The Association looks after the ground, leased from the National Trust. There is a first class pavilion, the subject of several refurbishments over the years.

The constituent clubs pay towards the upkeep, although the trend of falling cricket club membership means they are unable to contribute; can this trend be reversed? Fund raising is by way of quiz and race nights, and stoolball and football tournaments. Bar income provides the mainstay of income, but without regular cricket a no use, no income situation prevails. For whatever reason, membership



This uncaptioned Garland photograph will be from the late 1960s. Visiting German guests are in the striped shirts. Petworth FC. members in the darker strip.

of the cricket club has declined in recent years, although the ground must be amongst the most attractive in the locality. We may ponder the demise of a successful club: the lack of cricket tuition in schools, the gradual seepage of potential players to other clubs, or even the counter attractions of a digital age. Stoolball, while still flourishing, is not able to provide a comparable summer income in the absence of regular cricket. The football and stoolball clubs now have to find the means to generate sufficient income to pay the regular bills. These include £800 insurance, £680 for heating oil, £830 for electricity and rent £650. With other expenses, a figure in excess of £5,000 is required, without any allowance for periodical maintenance of buildings and equipment.

The football club first XI plays in West Sussex League division 1 and a successful season should see them finish in the top four in the division. The reserves team play in the same league in division 5 central, and this provides a good introduction for youngsters into league football.

Irrespective of the peaks and troughs of membership of the respective clubs, the running expenses continue to rise. To counter this the Association has introduced a One Hundred Club to try and provide a regular monthly income to help meet their commitments. In doing so they hope to stabilise their finances by replacing the cricket club income and preserve the town's playing facilities, and the clubs' existence.

We are appealing to the town to join us in our One Hundred Club. This involves payment of a monthly subscription of £5. Forty per cent is paid out in prizes and with 100 members this would give a top prize of £100 and £50 second and two of £25. The more members the correspondingly higher the prizes. For any member of the Petworth Society responding to the appeal the Society will receive a £10 donation, and a further £10 for each year the membership continues. Please see the reverse of this quarter's activity sheet for application details.

Vincent Phillips in conversation with the Editor.

Ron Parsons' reply to Brian Janman's letter (PSM 150 page 30)

Dear Mr Janman,

I read with interest your letter to Petworth Society asking about "The Petworth Ambulance". I'm sure you will already have had plenty of feedback on this subject, as there are many Petworth people still around who will remember the Ambulance well.

My family has special reason to remember this as the Ambulance Driver throughout the period you mention was my Grandfather, Horace William Parsons or Bill as he was always known.

As the family recalls, Bill became the Petworth Ambulance driver at some stage during World War II and stayed in the job up to his retirement in around 1971. During most of this time, up to the early 1960s, the Ambulance was as, you suspect, housed in a garage right on the junction of the A272 Midhurst Road with the A285 Station Road and Pound Street. The old garage is now an Antique showroom sitting right next to the roundabout.

When he first became the driver, Bill was living at No. 8 South Grove, Petworth. If a call came in he had to run up to the Ambulance Garage, which was part of the Newlands Council Office buildings, next to where I believe the Fire Engine was also stationed at the time.

Although we are not sure if he was the Ambulance Driver at the time, Bill was one of those who rushed to the scene of the bombing of the Petworth Boys School in 1942 and helped with the sad aftermath. His youngest son, Ron, was in the school at the time and for several hours he feared the worst as Ron was missing – thankfully he was later found safe hiding in shock in nearby woods.

Eventually the family moved from South Grove into the flat on the top floor of Newlands, so Bill could be right on hand if a call out came. He also became the part time caretaker of the Council Offices.

I'm told that the Ambulance was staffed by Bill, as the only driver, along with a duty nurse. If a phone call came in for the Ambulance, at any time day or night, Bill would rush off in the Ambulance to collect the Nurse, while my Grandmother phoned ahead to alert them. The family recalls a number of different Nurses at the time, Penny Penfold, Dai Wareham, Miss Austen, Mrs Carter, Mrs Jones and Mrs Bartlett, plus a few others I'm sure. If Bill took a holiday or was ill, his son Doug Parsons (my Father), or Mr Jack Smith would take over the driving duties.

In the early 1960s, the family moved out of Newlands as the council needed the

flat for storage. They moved to No. 25 Wyndham Road, but from then on he would park the Ambulance right outside Dawtrey Road, presumably as the Council also needed the Garage.

Throughout this period the Ambulance was owned by St. John's Ambulance and we still have Bill's St John's First Aid Exam certificates from throughout the 1960s, with the last one dated April 1968.

At some stage, we are not exactly sure when, Bill and the Ambulance transferred to the West Sussex County Council Ambulance service. Eventually the Ambulance relocated to Pulborough, when a new Ambulance Station was built there, although it was often parked overnight in Dawtrey Road on call at night.

I hope this is of some interest to you.

Yours sincerely

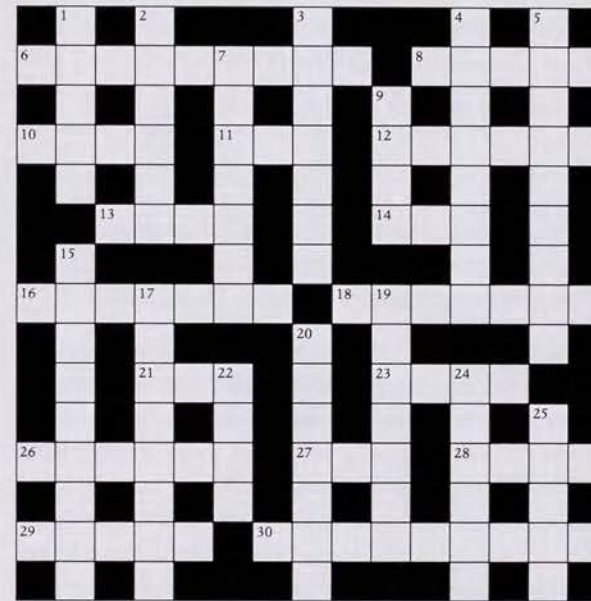
Ron Parsons

Narrow escape of Petworth House from fire

Roger Packham sends this cutting from the *Sussex Agricultural Express* of 1st November 1859.

On Wednesday afternoon last, Petworth House had a very narrow escape from being destroyed by fire. A man named Older observed smoke issuing from the fuel house, which is situated at the east end of the building, and at once apprised Mr Charter of the circumstance, who with praiseworthy despatch ascended to the roof and discovered that some charcoal had by some means become ignited, and had set fire to the roof of the shed in which it was contained. After considerable trouble Mr Charter succeeded in extinguishing the fire. The greatest praise is due to him, for had it not been for his energetic exertions, the probability is, that this splendid mansion with its rare works of art would now have been but a mass of ruins, as the whole of the immense stock of fuel would soon have been in flames, and it would have been next to an impossibility to have saved the building. The origin of the fire is unknown but it is supposed to have been caused by sparks from the laundry chimney falling among the charcoal dust which had lodged on the roof.

DEBORAH'S ARTY CROSSWORD



- 7 Object made from clay (7)
- 9 Small piece of jewellery in the studio (4)
- 15 C17th artist whose painting "The Younger Children of Charles I" hangs in Petworth House (5,4)
- 17 Turner painting "The Lake, Petworth: Sunset, a Stag -----" (8)
- 19 See 27ac
- 20 Ornate art style of C17th and C18th Europe (7)
- 22 Youngsters (4)
- 24 Square art movement? (6)
- 25 Dutch artist, famous for optical illusions, loses a hundred for a Surrey town (5)

ACROSS

- 6 Pa's candle reveals scenic painting (9)
- 8 Artist whose "The Adoration of the Kings" inspired Balthazar's Feast at Petworth House (5)
- 10 Subject of W.F. Witherington's painting repeated annually in June (4)
- 11 What happened to the water colours in the rain (3)
- 12 Deeply sad (6)
- 13 Originate from a flower? (4)
- 14 Note that sounds like a deer (3)
- 16 See 4dn
- 18 Contradict (7)
- 21 Drawing or writing liquid (3)
- 23 An art collector has to be (4)
- 26 Some deer initially around lake satisfied thirst (6)
- 27 & 19dn Two types of paint (3,7)

- 28 Sounds like 8ac - what rubbish (4)

- 29 Sir Anthony -----, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, rearranged art in Petworth House in 1950s (5)
- 30 Painter whose view of Petworth hangs in St. Mary's Church (9)

DOWN

- 1 Irish sculptor employed by the 3rd Earl (5)
- 2 The coming of Christ (6)
- 3 English poet, whose "Faerie Queene" inspired Blake's painting (7)
- 4 & 16ac Petworth artist who works closely with Peter Jerome (8,7)
- 5 Carving in ivory or bone, often done by sailors (9)

SOLUTION DEBORAH'S SOUTH DOWNS CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 6 Harebells, 7 Bothy, 10 Tracks, 11 Prong, 12 Gnat, 14 Old, 15 Eddy, 17 Dewpond, 19 Barrows, 22 Glow, 23 Far, 24 Ring, 27 Adder, 29 Butser, 30 Seven, 31 Yew Forest.

DOWN

- 1 Harry, 2 Beacon, 3 Leys, 4 Slindon, 5 No Go, 8 Highdown, 9 Spud, 13 Tun, 15 Ear, 16 Tegleaze, 18 Paw, 20 Air, 21 Bramber, 23 Farm, 25 Nature, 26 Dense, 28 Drey, 29 Buff

Dora Older's diary (9)

[I have again used the majority of Dora's entries which are very sparse. Ed.]

Wednesday April 2nd 1919

War Hospital Supply Depot closed. Tea given to workers. Auction sale of remnants of material after.

Saturday June 7th 1919

Arthur arrived at Dover last night. Demobilised at the Crystal Palace this morning and arrived home after an absence of 5 years excepting one month. He had landed at Marseille then came overland to Boulogne. *[Arthur is Dora's brother. Ed.]*

Arthur came from Alexandria in a Dutch liner 'Princess Juliana' to Marseilles – passing through the Straits of Messina – saw Stromboli in action, and along the coast of Italy. Then overland passing Versailles and seeing where the Peace Conference is being held.

Saturday June 28th 1919

The Peace Treaty signed today.

The Band made its first appearance in the Square after a lapse of five years.

Saturday July 19th 1919

Peace Celebrations Day. Sports and Tea in the Park – helped Mrs Cragg at a Tea Table – showery afternoon, wet evening.

Friday Sept. 19th 1919

Day by the sea at Southsea.

Monday Sept. 22nd 1919

Day in London.

Saturday Sept. 27th – Sunday Oct. 5th

Great National Railway Strike. No trains except on main lines run by voluntary helpers – numbers of road lorries transporting food stuff.

Warrens sent an enormous lorry round the country with their goods – brought us bacon, cheese, margarine and butter, great excitement when these food lorries came into the Town for there were several during the week. 'Wonderful the way the trade of the country was kept going.

November 11th 1921 kept as Remembrance Day of the Armistice.

Poppies sold in the streets for the fund for the upkeep of the cemeteries for the fallen soldiers of the Great War.

[It is time to leave Dora's diary. There is a complete gap until July 1928 with a mention of King George V's stay at Pitshill for Goodwood week. Mr Hammond the butler for Col. Mitford gave Dora a glass that the king had used. Entries continue sporadically after that but are very random and reflect largely family matters. With many thanks to Alan Older. Ed.]

Selham days (1)

My family have Sussex roots, an ancestor of my father's side being traced to Ardingly in 1524. Certainly by 1872 they were at Cowfold, moving to Whipp Hill, Easebourne by 1900. My mother's family were from Devon but they too had Sussex connections, my great-great grandfather on that side being at Wenham Farm, Rogate in 1842. A generation on, my maternal grandfather was at Hawkurst Farm on Cocking Causeway, moving to Souters Farm, Easebourne, as the century turned.

My father, Dick, born at Whipp Hill in 1904, trained as an auctioneer in Shrewsbury but had to return home to help out at. Here he met my mother and took Moorlands Farm at Ambersham. My brother Richard was born in 1932 and I followed in the early months of the war. I was too young to have much impression of the war years but I do remember being bundled into the cellar by Richard, Mother, and Dorothy Franks, Mother's help, during an air-raid. My parents took the view that as long as the children were safe, they could sleep as normal.

In 1943 my father took the adjoining Manor Farm at Selham, farmed by the Smith family since the nineteenth century. Like Moorlands it was a Cowdray tenancy and was some three hundred acres.

Moorlands is 150 yards from the river Rother and from the time I was old enough to walk I would spend much of my time exploring the river bank. Life by the river was magical: kingfishers nested in the steep banks below the old lock and there were a pair of otters resident in the early 1950s. In those days of individual cesspits the Rother was beautifully clear with every species of coarse fish, including trout. There was normally a huge hatch of mayfly in the middle of June, lasting about a week. The advent of mains drainage was the beginning of the end for the Rother below Ambersham at least as a fishery.

My first school was Mrs Baggaly's private school at North End, Petworth, just

north of the present Stonemason's Arms. I remember being fascinated by the organ music at a summer fair on Hampers Common. It would be 1946 or 1947. My wife and I have always loved that special sound. Even now we visit the Dorset Steam Fair to enjoy sounds and smells of old.

I didn't particularly like school, my main interest being to get home. I moved on to Fernden School at Haslemere, like North End now long since closed. I didn't like class work but otherwise was happy enough. Every boy was important to headmaster Charles Brownrigg who kept his young audience spellbound whether in class or on the cricket field. Bradfield followed. Fortunately they played soccer rather than rugby, which I hated. One of my father's friends had a son at Bradfield which probably explains the choice of school. Three years, School Certificate and I was ready to leave.



North End School – formerly Petworth workhouse.
This photograph may be from the 1930s.
Courtesy of Mr Andrew Howard.

As the younger of two sons and with my father having a financial interest in Midhurst Granaries, I was sent up to Ayr on the west coast of Scotland to learn the agricultural and corn trade at the old-established firm of McGill and Smith. It was a big change from Selham but I made a few very good friends. Returning at Christmas 1958 I started at Midhurst Granaries under the, quite splendid, manager

Arthur Barnes, but after six months I was back at the farm. Not a popular move, but I made myself useful with carpentry repairs, gate hanging and fencing – useful enough to be accepted.

The farm was growing about 30 acres of sugar beet at the time. In fact, nearly all farms with some arable land were growing valuable acreages of sugar beet. During the war years all farms had been obliged to grow an acreage of potatoes and/or sugar beet. At the time, one of my father's employees, Jim Slade, and his three sons, John, Fred and Ronnie, would set out (single) the beet, then flat hoe, dealing with any weeds that the tractor hoe had missed. At the beginning of October beet harvesting would begin in earnest. The "campaign" as it was known, started with the beet factories offering "free loading" for about a week so that a large supply could be made ready for slicing at the factories. Following one week of free loading, a strictly limited supply of permits was supplied for weekly loading.

Roger Comber – to be continued.

Three brothers

Writing recently¹ Trevor Purnell paid tribute to the late Jack Holloway. "For many years on Remembrance Day he read the list of our village war dead with great dignity and in a way that only an old soldier could. The congregation was always greatly moved when he read from the Great War list Basil Barrington-Kennett . . . Victor Barrington-Kennett . . . Aubrey Barrington-Kennett. As he spoke these names many of us were imagining the heartache of a grieving mother, coming to terms with losing her three sons in this terrible war."

"Coming to terms." Could anyone ever come to terms with such a tragedy? Jack Holloway, born just after the war ended, would have known the Barrington-Kennetts only from local remembrance of them, and whatever remembrance there once was will now have perished. A quarter of a century ago it was still possible to pick up echoes, Basil Barrington-Kennett in particular being well remembered. Here is Henry Whitcomb²:

"The first aeroplane that ever came to Petworth landed in a field to the rear of the old Tillington almshouses at the top of Hungers Lane. The propeller was in the middle and the pilot sat in a kind of basket. The wings were held together with wire struts. It was as much like a great bird as a flying machine and was flown by Mr Kennett, son of Colonel Kennett at Tillington House. It was a Sunday and people came out of church to see what the noise was. I remember

people running up Tillington Road after the plane and cattle stampeding in the field at Frog Farm. My brother had a box camera and took a lot of pictures but for some reason the local police sergeant came to our house and confiscated the plates – I never knew why.” There is a similar account by Percy Pullen³ and a rather less enthusiastic mention by Florence Rapley in her diary.

An officer in the Grenadier Guards, Basil would be seconded to the newly formed Royal Flying Corps (RFC), where he spent the initial months of the war. With military aviation still in its infancy and casualties mounting on the Western Front, Basil was recalled to the Grenadiers and died at Festubert in May 1915.⁴ Victor, Basil’s younger brother, followed a somewhat similar path but remained with the RFC. He was killed in Flanders in March 1916. The youngest brother Aubrey, an infantry officer, had been killed on the Aisne in September 1914.

Hugh Whitcomb, himself a veteran of the conflict, recalled:⁵

“I suppose I was about 12 years old when I saw our first aeroplane. One June evening as the congregation was leaving the church after Sunday service an extraordinary looking object, something like a huge box kite appeared, heading west. All the young, and some not so young, people chased after it and saw it land in a meadow behind Tillington House. This was the home of Colonel Kennett, then retired, but formerly a member of the King’s Bodyguard⁶ and the pilot of the plane was one of his 4 (sic) sons, all army officers. They were all killed quite early in the Great War and in 1916 I came across the grave of one of them behind the trench line near the village of Festubert (northern France).”

Hugh Whitcomb’s memoir elicited a response from Kath Vigar who could remember the plane landing. “I had an old snap of it, but unfortunately left an envelope of old snaps on the 22 bus when I was travelling back to Brighton some years ago.” Although a child during the war Kath could remember “the sadness caused when the boys were killed one by one.” Kath Vigar would be a good fifteen or twenty years older than Jack Holloway.

In later years I would often talk to Jack Holloway, then somewhat infirm. One day he gave me two very fragile “books” written by Ellinor Frances Barrington-Kennett – effectively small paperbacks. One, *Rosemary*, is a fairly predictable story of a girl who grows up in a Devon village, moves perforce to Scotland on the death of her widowed mother, passing up the chance of marrying the village’s bright young rector, and meets an officer in the Highland Light Infantry. He is badly wounded in the war and left blind. He marries Rosemary and the couple live happily – he had at least survived the war.

The other book, little more than a pamphlet, is *In Remembrance* by “E. F. B-K” and printed for private circulation. If it is not great poetry it is certainly deeply felt. On the Aisne, September 1914, recalls Aubrey’s death while the lines on the



JACK AND LIZZIE HAD NEVER BEEN IN A CAR BEFORE.

Page 28.

From E. F. Barrington-Kennett's *Four Little Brothers*. (Wells Gardner).
Second impression 1918. The artist is Gordon Browne R.I. See *Three Brothers*.

Rohan McCullough is Vera Britain. Leconfield Hall March 25th.
 Photograph by Ian Godsmark



Petworth F.C. 1st 2012

(in their new kit sponsored by The Hungry Guest)

J. Pafford (Manager), Drew Clark, Tom Carter, Jaysi Wells, Darren Hotston, Dave Torode, Dean Bicknell, Alex Wadey, Chris Locke, G. Stanton (Chairman)
 Florian Baierl, Conor Burrows, Rob Torode, Dan Warren, Martin Dillon, Darren Hodd.

See Petworth Joint Sports.



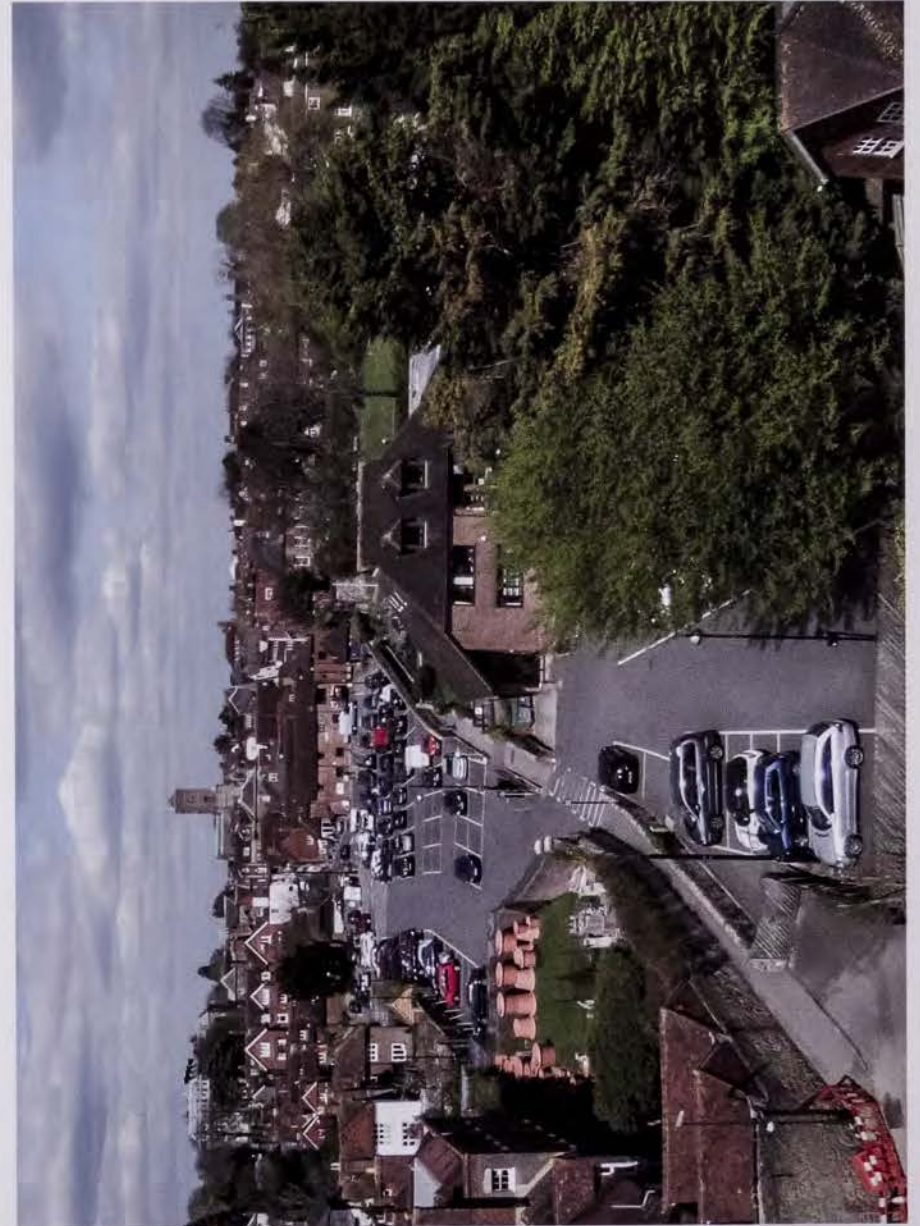
Egdean church in spring.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



Egdean church in spring.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



The "Lent Lily" in West Dean woods. See West Dean walk.
Photograph by Ian Godsmark.



View of Petworth from crane during the building of Morgan Court 2012.
Photograph courtesy of Ian Godsmark.



This photograph, kindly lent by Andrew Howard, is like no other I have seen. The procession is turning at the present A272 Horsham Road junction. It could well portray the funeral of the Leconfield Estate land agent Herbert Watson in 1909.

death of Lieut Immelmann reflect the death of Victor in 1916 and carry us beyond mere revenge. Not an easy sentiment in the circumstances:

A master of the air,
Our foe's great champion dies
This final duel fought
Helpless and still he lies.

No more on soaring wing,
Through mist and cloud he flies,
Swooping with hawk-like spring
Upon the longed-for prize.

Surely it was his hand
Which with unerring aim
Brought our dear son to earth
Swift as a meteor's flame.

Now each has given life
In his own country's cause
And paid the last great debt
To battle's cruel laws.

But in that far-off land
Where ceases earthly strife,
Our boy may give his hand
To him who took his life.

June 1916.

These are certainly extremely rare books but with books rare does not necessarily equate with valuable. Their value lies of course in the local connection and Jack was clearly anxious that they should not be lost. I have always had George Garland's copy (formerly Herbert Earle's) of a more ambitious work by E. F. B-K "Under a Dark Cloud" (Elliot Stock 1918) a novella length story again reflecting the 1914-1918 war but marred by the denouement being predictable a quarter of the way through. Of all E. F. B-K books this is probably the most readily available. Rather less common are what appear to be the last two works in the E. F. B-K canon *Four Little Brothers* and *Three Little Sisters*.

Four Little Brothers is a short case-bound book, and the contents clearly reflect the Barrington-Kennetts' very comfortable life-style, chauffeur, cook, gardener and nurse: one suspects that the writer is trawling memories of days when the boys

were very young. She retells the story of the Ugly Duckling, recalls a past Christmas day, offers the biblical story of Joseph and his brethren in Egypt and moves on to a story of skating on a frozen lake. Despite Father's warning, "We had better not go on the ice near the island boys, as there are some springs there and it might not be quite safe". Young Lionel duly falls in and pneumonia ensues. "The doctor says this is the worst day, and if he gets through tonight, he hopes all danger will be over." The crisis passes. It is likely that the writer is recalling her own experience.

An epilogue written in July 1916 notes the coming of the war, the death of three of four sons, with one still on active service "fighting with a sad heart for the dear brothers who have gone." Perhaps "Godfrey" would survive the war as had Rosemary's blind husband. Perhaps in her sadness, fiction was one way for Ellinor to preserve some remembrance of those who had gone. Certainly "the boys never forgot their happy nursery days with Daddy and Mother and their dear Nana at Melsonby Hall." *Three Little Sisters* follows very much the same pattern as its companion volume.

The Barrington-Kennetts left Tillington House soon after the war and moved to London.

P.

1. In the Tillington and Duncton Parish Magazine.

2. PSM 64 (June 1991).

3. PSM 59 (March 1990).

4. Anne Baker's life of Sir Geoffrey Salmond "From Biplane to Spitfire" (Leo Cooper 2003) in the standard reference.

5. PSM 96 (June 1999).

6. See 1911 census s.v.

7. Wells Gardner (2nd impression 1918) illustrated by Gordon Browne, R.I. I found a single copy on the Internet, as I did of *Three Little Sisters* (Wells Gardner no date, again, illustrated by Gordon Browne.)

Wassailing at Duncton

Portraying a vanishing Bedham in the early 1930s "Rhoda Leigh"¹ reports a discussion in the hamlet: "Gone out it has," lamented Mrs Swift, "why even Tom the postman don't do it now, says the village holds 'tis just foolishness."

"Us ain't village though," argued Chris, suddenly finding his tongue. "An I hopes as we'll get more apples up this year. Since Dad giv it up we ain't near as many, so now we've tried again maybe we'll get some more."



"And the Captain would have on a robe made of something like flowered cretonne ... Wassailers at Duncton about 1900.

The discussion is of "wassailing" the apple trees ie singing to apple trees, beating them, and pouring ale on their roots² with a view to ensuring a good crop. Clearly the tradition was effectively moribund at Bedham. As long ago as December 1979 (PSM 18) I drew attention to a short note in the *Sussex Daily News* for January 8th 1919. Even at Duncton, unlike Bedham, noted as an outpost of wassailing, there were problems. Wassailing had been suspended during the 1914-18 war, the old "chief" Mr Dick Knight, had died and his son Mr Arthur Knight had vowed to continue the tradition. Although the family had left the village. Arthur returned to fulfil his promise. In dismal weather, three drenched wassailers did what they could: the Court family would continue the tradition in somewhat attenuated form until 1939.

Such information as is extant survives largely in newspaper recollection, an occasional letter, or perhaps article, eliciting further memories as late as the mid-1960s. Jacqueline Simpson surveys the rather sparse canon. Particularly interesting is a letter published in the *West Sussex Gazette* of 29th December 1906 and written by a Mr G. W. Harfield. "The Chief wassailer is Mr Richard Knight, who has discharged the duties for fifty-five years. Dressed in what some would describe as a grotesque costume, principally composed of patches rivalling the rainbow in multitudinous tints, the whole surmounted by an indescribable hat, bearing, displayed in front, a huge rosy-cheeked apple, he heads a procession of villages carrying horns and such lowly musical types as bits of gas piping . . ."

Some sixty years later an article by L. M. Candlin in the *West Sussex Gazette* called forth another memory of the period before 1914. Jacqueline Simpson³ gives a short extract but the letter is worth re-printing in full. It is clear that even in E. F. Turner's time there was some relaxation in the choice of song, probably not countenanced in early days. He writes:⁴

MORE MEMORIES OF THE DUNCTON WASSAILERS

I was most interested in L. M. Candlin's article about the old wassailing customs in Sussex, as I was the youngest of the family living at Mill Farm, Duncton at the time mentioned.

The first Captain of the Wassailers I remember was Dick Knight, who had a dark spade beard. We children would become very excited as "Old Christmas Eve" (January 5) got nearer, and on the night we used to be continually opening the back door to listen for the wassailers.

At last we would hear them, faintly at first, and gradually getting louder. It sounded as though they split into two parties, one coming down the lane on one side of the millpond and the second through the orchard on the other.

What we heard was something like this:-

All together: "Here stands a good old apple tree" (or "Nanny tree" or "Green Pippin tree." etc.)

First party: "Stand fast root."

Second party: "Bear well top."

First party: "Every little bough."

Second party: "Bear apples now."

First party: "Every little twig."

Second party: "Bear apples big."

First party: "Hat fulls."

Second party: "Capfulls."

First party: "Three score sackfulls."

Captain: "Holler, boys, holler."

Then there would be a burst of horn-blowing, shouting and a general racket. Sometimes a big bad word would float across when someone trod in a hole or tripped over a root.

When they reached the house, they would come into the big kitchen, with its pump, sink, bread-oven, three coppers and fireplace to sing songs and drink cider. One would be carrying the enormous cowhorn, and the Captain would have on a robe made of something like flowered cretonne and a straw hat with big apples all round the wide brim, and a bow of wide ribbon.

His song was about "Three bold fishermen rolling down the tide" and someone with "three golden chains hanging dangling three times round." The tune was marvellous and I would dearly like to know the title and get a record of it, if one exists. I think his son sang "Two little girls in blue."

Fred Lock from Upwaltham was a regular. He sang "Bid adieu to old England." You might get anything from John Rowe or Bernard Connor. People said they could remember enough songs to last for two hours or so. We generally had "The Farmer's Boy," "If I were a blackbird," "Seagull" and "Farmer Giles" among others.

My sisters used to stand near the doorway leading out of the kitchen, ready to go to the cellar for more cider or else to vanish for the time being if a song seemed to be getting salty.

When they left, we used to go outside to hear more wassailing, the voices getting fainter and fainter as they went through another part of the orchard on their way to the next stopping-place.

In the course of time Dick Knight's place as Captain was taken by his son "Spratty" (I thought his right name was Arthur). I think the wassailers stopped coming in the early twenties, but in 1920 or thereabouts I heard Jack Court sing "The sunshine of your smile" and someone else, who seemed put out because he did not know any old songs, sang "Back Home in Tennessee."

E. F. TURNER

Jacqueline Simpson mentions Victorian survivals at West Chiltington and Horsted Keynes and the custom is occasionally found in other English counties. At Horsted Keynes in the 1670s the Rev Giles Moore notes in his diary a gift of sixpence to the "howling boys" a traditional name for the wassailers. Discussing the reference,⁵ Arthur J. Rees quotes the poet Herrick in the seventeenth century:

"Wassail the trees that they may beare
You, many a plum and many a peare:
For more or less fruits they will bring,
As you do give them a wassailing."

Clearly in Herrick's time the custom was not confined to apples.

P

1. *Past and Passing* (Heath Cranton 1932) page 192 Rhoda Leigh is a pseudonym for Miss Metherell.
2. Jacqueline Simpson: *The Folklore of Sussex* (Batsford 1973) page 100.
3. See note 2.
4. Cutting courtesy of Mr John Robbins.
5. Arthur J. Rees: *Old Sussex and Her Diarists*

Letters from home

Volunteering in January 1944 and leaving the Navy in the autumn of 1947, Jumbo Taylor would spend most of his service in the Far East, rarely returning home. During his time abroad he kept up a regular correspondence with his mother whose letters to him seem largely to have survived. His own letters home have not. Mrs Taylor had another son serving abroad and a younger daughter living at home.

While much of the correspondence understandably relates to family news, the letters offer a unique insight into everyday life in Petworth in the final years of the

war and the period immediately following. In the early phase the Taylor family are living in Park Road, moving after the war to 292A North Street. The still derelict school and laundry buildings on the Horsham Road junction would be a constant memorial of loss, for the family, like so many in Petworth, had lost a son in the school bombing at Michaelmas 1942. Petworth remained in mourning with the communal grave, in the Horsham Road cemetery, a focus for grief. There were frequent visits and it would never be far from Mrs Taylor's thoughts. Jumbo's father, Fred (Dad in the letters), working before the war in the stables at Petworth House, later transferring to the gardens, was also acting as Lord Leconfield's driver, taking his lordship to innumerable public functions across the county. At all times extremely discreet, Fred offers a very occasional insight into life at the great house in Lord Leconfield's last years.

As tends to happen with regular correspondence Mrs Taylor, who writes at least weekly, often has to cast about for news, so that what would normally pass without comment is reflected in the letters. This is, of course, their strength. Dating can be uncertain as postmarks are often indistinct, and while Mrs Taylor usually gives day and month, she often omits the year. The forwarding address can give an indication but the overall impression is not dependent on chronology. For working people in Petworth things continued after the war much as they had while it continued. Above all, the letters as the best letters do, give the reader the impression of actually being present. So (25th October 1946) "It's been a very cold morning, a very white frost, there was quite a lot of blackberries I had meant to pick but I'm afraid they won't be much good . . . All the council men are gathering outside for lorries to take them to work. It's just after 7.30 a.m." A few days later she is writing of a spate of local burglaries: "There's been several burglaries. Mrs . . . was broken into and £18 taken, then the Lodge at Hilliers had watches etc taken from there and on Mon. Ratford Farm along the Balls X road. And some chicken taken from the back of the Angel Hotel."

Winters were cold. So on the 12th February (1946?) she writes, "It's terribly cold here, in fact it seems to get colder every day." A few logs follow before some coal and anthracite from Corralls save the day. "The milk even froze in the larder and that's with a fire in the scullery so you can just imagine how cold it is. The war is over but the power is cut for 3 hours morning and 2 hours afternoon but I can cook our dinners after 12."

Shortage stimulates a self-sufficient way of living that was a legacy of the 1930s and indeed long before. So (14th May 1947) from North Street: "The garden is looking well. Dad can't get on with potato planting as Bob hasn't brought the seed over yet. But the peas and broad beans are coming along and unless we get some frosts there will be apple picking to do. We have had several lots of

rhubarb." The North Street garden is supplemented by an allotment. So a July letter states, "Today we are going raspberry picking, they are 2/6d lb in the shops." The family had the allotment when they were in Park Road and clearly kept it on the move to North Street. On the day the war ends they are going down the Station Road to the allotment when they meet Hector, a Canadian soldier and a family friend. He is sitting in his tank and talks to them for a quarter of an hour.

The North Street garden looks good in May. "Our fruit trees down the garden are just a picture. There's two birds nesting in the honeysuckle near the lav." Three weeks earlier Mrs Taylor had noted the apricot trees blossoming against the house, and a few flowers on the way down the garden.

The war brought a new one-way system to the town's streets. Writing of Park Road Mrs Taylor observes: "This is definitely a one-way street or road now with all traffic coming up here and East Street is the way down. It's a bit of a muddle sometimes." She notes too, "We get no afternoon post now but two in the morning."

Shortage and rationing are a persistent theme. So in January 1945: "Some lemons the other week but no oranges since before Xmas." Christmas demanded a certain ingenuity. "We had our cake. Made some almond paste with soya flour and iced it. Quite good for make-believe." Even with the war over, "There is no sign of anything coming off the ration – in fact packet suet has gone on the ration. We can have 1oz of suet or 1oz lard each week." The occasional food parcel from relatives in America was highly prized, Uncle Stan sending ½lb of tea, 1lb raisins, ½lb cocoa, 2 little packets of sweets, 40 cigarettes, some steel wool (for cleaning saucepans) and soap. "As the parcel was not opened by customs there was no duty payable."

Even in June 1947, "There won't be so many spuds to get up this year. And right now we've got 3 potatoes and none in the town and there haven't been for 2 weeks and then they have the nerve to say we are better fed than before the war."

On the 3rd January 1946 she reflects on the first post-war Christmas: "It really wasn't much like Christmas. We've still got a cracker left. No, we didn't get any nuts this year, nor extra fruit. It was a job even to find a couple of pounds of apples. We all had an extra sweet ration and the darn shops were all sold out before Christmas. I've still some coupons and no currants in the town."

As late as April 1947 Mr Whitcomb manager at the International Stores tells Dad, "Things are really short, excepting of dates and things like that most people won't buy . . ." She adds, "I see there's some walnuts in the shops. Five shillings a pound. They can certainly keep them at that price." A box of tea sent home had been opportune. It was April 1945 and there had been enough left at home for only two more times. A promised can of peaches and another of lambs' tongues

is eagerly awaited but has not, so far, arrived. Bananas remain much sought after even with the war finished well over a year. "Got some today" (23rd November 1946). As the greengrocer is rather slack about marking the ration book there could be some more on Monday.

Chicken are an important part of an economy of this kind. So, in October 1946 Dad is putting some "Varley" flakes through the mincer for the chicken. He also gets a hundredweight sack of cheap wheat at Midhurst Mill for 10/6d. Washed, it's now drying. Mr Bone at the Mill has told him to bring a case over for some Sussex ground oats, while Mr Brown gives him 24lbs of meal for the chicken in the morning and, in the afternoon, 3 white chicken, 2 leghorn and 1 Wyandotte, "they are about 18 months now. At present they are getting very moulty, so they will soon start laying." In fact the Wyandotte has to be killed. "Unless we got there first and collected the eggs, she ate them . . . We've had 24 eggs this week and she has eaten several." Eggs were important – otherwise "we get three about every three weeks and not too good at that."

For Christmas 1945, "I hear this morning that we are to get extra rations for Xmas. 1lb sugar each, 6ozs marge and butter (4ozs butter, 2ozs marge) ½lb sweets and 10 pence worth of meat – each of course." "No, I won't forget the cloves in the apple puddings but you will have to bring them home with you. Can't get them, or pickling spice or pepper. Haven't been able to for months."

What the war certainly did was to disperse overseas a generation that, in the 1930s, would hardly have expected to travel, certainly not on such a scale. Reluctant as they may have been initially, the experience would become part of the fabric of their lives. Disruption was part of everyday existence. Someone cycles down from London for the weekend – a journey of seven hours but nothing compared with long trips abroad. In March 1945 Bill Barnes, Fred Taylor's former colleague in the Stables and latterly in the Gardens, reports, "the best capture of the war – three barrels of German beer." The letters are full of references to local men, here, there and everywhere, sometimes meeting by chance at some exotic location, then as soon as going their separate ways.

By early 1945 enemy action is spasmodic. So, on the 25th March Mrs Taylor hears the warning just before 8 in the morning – "the first time this year. We didn't hear any more and it was all over in five minutes." An updated note, apparently from the same time, reports that "something went off at 5.30 this morning. It shook the place and woke everyone up. Mr Godsalve (Leconfield Clerk of the Works) said they found some pieces of metal at Roundwyck but no sign of it hitting the ground so it must have gone off in the air." On the 30th April the end is clearly in sight. "The Italians have made short work of Musso." News too is seeping out of the concentration camps.



"All the fair pulled up yesterday. They are parked ... all down the road to the Common."
 Photograph by George Garland.

Anticipating the end, Phyllis Goatcher, daughter of Jumbo's pre-service employer Mr Payne, the Lombard Street butcher, writes questioning the general euphoria. "We are here waiting every day to hear that Germany is finished but why people are getting so mad about celebrations I can't think – the cost has been too awful and really until everyone is demobbed it won't make much difference to lots of us." Phyllis had a husband serving abroad.

The long-awaited end was possibly something of an anti-climax. So (May 9th 1945), "It's been a long time coming and now, well, we just can't realise it's all over. The Commandos spent yesterday round and round the Square letting off thunderflashes and ringing the old fire bells. They were still at it at 1.30 a.m. this morning and dancing round the Town Hall. It was floodlit and so was the church and there was a bonfire round the Sheepdowns. Sgts. Bourne and Everest (Petworth Police) had some fireworks too . . . the Canadians were supposed to be confined to camp but I think they must have walked out for you couldn't move for them, the pubs were open till midnight and there was some beer drunk, I bet lots didn't get home."

By the 25th May the buses are running to Sutton three times a week while another bus runs from Midhurst round Heyshott and Graffham and comes back the Station way. By the 26th November, "It's much lighter in the streets nights now. All the lights are on but there had to be a hell of a storm before they were lit up. Till last Sat. only 5 lights had been on. It was worse than blackout but it seems strange to see all etc. lit up."

Odd scraps of information filter through from the great house. The rain helps the Gardens; 170 dozen sweet peas being packed and sold at 7/6d a dozen. Ward the chauffeur has elected not to return so Dad will continue to drive his lordship. Horsham cricket week is coming up for his lordship, while there is the unveiling of memorials, taking the salute at parades, even a spell at Cockermonth Castle, Mrs Taylor spending a few days up there herself. The Hall boy has been rude and his lordship has sent him home and there is a new butler while papers have been signed for the House to be handed over to the National Trust. A final announcement is due. "Two blokes walked through the Stable Yard and up the drive and through the front door and wandered all over the House. The butler happened to meet them in one of the corridors. They slipped off out and he phoned the police and they rounded them up. Took them to the Police Station and searched them and left them there until someone came to vouch for them." As regards the church steeple his lordship's attitude is reserved: he is not prepared to pick up the bill for capping the tower.

Radio still rules: Dick Barton for a younger audience or Variety Band Box "Harry Lister and his Hayseeds are just on. They are a really crazy gang." Mr

Streeter still broadcasts as the Radio Gardener but Mrs Taylor rather likes Mr Middleton. On a trip to Thakeham she glimpses Mr Streeter waiting at Pulborough for the bus home, he will have been in London. The cinema is a mainstay but it's useless to think of going to see the later performance. You can't get in; it's full of Canadians. Carmen Miranda appears in "Something for the Boys." The last week in November 1945 is a blank week. It's Henry V with Laurence Olivier and no one seems to like it. A coach trip to Brighton for a pantomime offers Ted Ray as Buttons and Horace King as the Baron.

The Canadians are in fact "quite quiet and some quite elderly. No Jumb they don't slide down the roof these days."

Everyone notes the return of the annual November fair, for so long a symbol of hope in desolate war years. On the day itself, November 20th, Mrs Taylor looks back to the 19th. "All the fair pulled up yesterday. They are parked in the place where the laundry house and school was and all down the road to the Common . . . I saw Hammonds go up this afternoon with the little roundabouts . . . Dad saw they were putting up bumper cars this afternoon . . . It's only in the Square for one day, Wed!" Looking back on the fair she writes, "There was a devil of a lot of stuff in the Square for the fair on Wed. but of course it poured with rain . . . We got home before 7 o'clock. They have moved their caravans from outside here today." By the Sunday afternoon it's still raining and blowing, the fields by the brook are flooded and it's over the road just along the Horsham Road.

In June 1947 there is a fair on Hampers Common. It closed by nine o'clock. "It's rather a nice kind of fair. Such a respectable crowd of people, they come here off the Epsom Downs after the Derby."

Feelings were still understandably raw. "Did you see the piece in the paper where the Bishop of Chichester had sent a letter to America telling them not to send food to Britain as the Germans needed it more. I'd like to have a few moments with him, so would lots of others. He'd get some plain words. Let them do as they've made others do."

P.

The earlier history of Egdean church¹

A. A. Evans twenty years rector of Friston and East Dean, near Eastbourne, retired and living in the North Pallant at Chichester, visited Egdean² in the early 1930s. It was Monday, a washing day, and he was pleased to find, "white lines fluttering out on the common and getting bleached in the summer sunlight." Evans' great

interest was church architecture and he was soon making his way to the church of St Bartholomew, no doubt his reason for coming to Egdean in the first place. Given the date 1622 "cut in brick over the doorway" Evans saw a rare example of what he called the "Laudian revival"³ to be compared with South Malling and the graceful church porch at Ford. He thought "the pleasant green-tinted sandstone outside" had come from the Ventnor quarries, while the brickwork of the rest of the building was of the highest quality.

Evans had come prepared: he knew of an older church building apparently taken down, although he thought that the old font had somehow survived. He knew too of the arrival as resident minister in 1663 of one George Bradshaw, dispossessed under the Commonwealth, whose subsequent career had included a spell as an alehouse keeper. Worn and broken in health, he had held the cure until his death five years later. Of Bradshaw's predecessors at Egdean Evans clearly had no knowledge.

Some fifty years on from Evans' visit⁴ I attempted using newly available documentation from Petworth House to outline the church's earlier history but found the extant material allusive and incomplete. I could do little more than draw attention to Ralph Blinston's role in building the church and ask a number of questions to which I had no satisfactory answer. Thirty years on, my discussions with Michael Till, while leaving much obscure, have provided a measure of context for Blinston's activities.

While the ecclesiastical parish of Egdean is now served from Petworth; this is a relatively modern arrangement. Ancient Egdean's connections were with the Priory at Hardham, sited at the important junction on the old Roman road, and a foundation of Augustinian canons going back at least to the twelfth century. The canons, four in number, under a prior, were not enclosed monks but ordained priests, each responsible for a ministry or ministries.

By 1279 Walter Dawtrey, tenant in demesne⁵ had a significant local territory that included Egdean. He had a charter for an annual fair⁶ on the 1st May and free warren. As an act of piety, Dawtrey made over the benefice of Egdean with its dues to the priory at Hardham, the arrangement being undisturbed when the demesne passed by inheritance to the Goring family at Burton. By 1521 the Augustinian canon John Frankwell from Hardham had responsibility for Egdean, St Bartholomew's being part of a wider pastoral responsibility. The living was not now supported by tithes, if it had ever been, Frankwell like his predecessors had a "corrody,"⁷

By the early-mid sixteenth century, Sir Henry Goring from Burton had attained the position of Knight of the bedchamber to Henry VIII and would, no doubt, be all too aware of that king's intentions with regard to the monastic foundations. It

would be an appropriate, not to say opportune, time, to take back what Sir William Dawtrey, in a less secular age, had so long ago made over to the now threatened priory at Hardham. The benefice became a "discharged rectory" with the dues passing back to the old demesne and hence to the Goring family. The priory link was severed, leaving the ancient obligation to provide a perpetual curate in limbo on the death of the last priest in 1547. By this first year of Edward I, Egdean had no officiating minister: in technical terms the parish of Egdean had been "impropriated". Inevitably the church fell into disuse. After William Smart's will of 1547, seeking burial in "the church yarde of Egden" and the customary memorial masses, there is silence.

The period from 1547 to the appearance of Ralph Blinston in the early 1620s to expose the "concealment" under Henry VIII is obscure, but clearly the old Hardham days gradually passed from memory. Seventy years and a cataclysmic religious revolution passed, while the land involved came into the possession of the powerful Earls of Northumberland at Petworth. At once free-spending and indigent⁵, they had been happy enough to let out the old parsonage glebe and church, even the old church bells had been appropriated to the landlord's use, while the fabric of the old church had been reused for secular purposes.

With the "concealment" now revealed, Blinston had a strong case, at least in theory. It was strong enough for the Lord Keeper to agree to him being presented as incumbent. In fact Blinston met determined opposition, being kept out of the parsonage and glebe⁶ "with force and strong hand." At some point the Lord Keeper instructed the sheriff of the county to put Blinston in possession of the cure of Egdean employing whatever measures were appropriate. At the same time Blinston received the King's licence "to collect alms and benevolences from subjects in divers several counties and cities for the speedy perfectyng and finishing of a parish church."

Ralph Blinston seems to have had influential friends; he also had, on his doorstep, some determined opponents. John Dee, apparently the most prominent Northumberland tenant, brought an action against Blinston in King's Bench for trespass, claiming that the sheriff had put him (Dee) out of his legal possession. The Earl's own position was equivocal: clearly acting under advice, he was prepared to reply to Blinston's petition but "not upon his oath or upon his honour." He did, however, delay a diffident reply sufficiently for the law term to expire and for Blinston to have left London.

At some time there was talk of resolving the situation by appeal to those who had recollection of the period before 1547. Blinston reasonably pointed out that anyone who could give first-hand testimony would have to be over eighty at the very least and could not be expected to travel to give evidence "without great

hazarde and danger of their lives." They would have to be examined quickly or they might die and "the same might trench to the losse of the said gleebe and disherison of the said church." Blinston would prepare a list of questions for witnesses, on the assumption that such people existed. If he did so the questions do not survive. All that is extant are interrogations on behalf of the Earl and John Dee. They seek to establish details of the occupation of one Frye, one Roper, and the transference of a lease from one Stone to Skinner and thence to Skinner's widow. They also seek details of the sheriff's forcible removal of the Earl's tenants, and whether the church has been in use between the death of the last incumbent and the coming of Ralph Blinston. Clearly it had not. The Earl's position, legally shaky as it was, will not have been helped by his uneasy relationship with King James, nor do the interrogations tackle the basic question at issue. Re-establishing the position after 1547 had little bearing on what had happened before. There is no indication that the interrogations ever received a reply.

Thirty years on from 1980 we have some clarification but insistent questions remain. Who was Ralph Blinston? He remains as elusive as ever. How long was he incumbent at Egdean? William Jenner was rector in 1677 whether as successor to Evans' Bradshaw is not clear, Evans gives no authority. The register begins in 1646. And the attribution to Saint Bartholomew, a saint very much revered by the Saxons, as was Hardham's Saint Botolph. An echo here of a time long centuries before 1547?

P. and Michael Till

1. A collaboration with Michael Till.

2. *A Saunterer in Sussex* (1935) Chapter xviii

3. Michael found Evans' use of the term problematic. Egdean was built in 1622 before Archbishop Laud came to power and influence. Michael associated the phrase with high or moderately high churchmen, centuries later, putting hangings round an altar hung in the William Morris pre-Raphaelite way from iron rails or silk (or other cord). It appealed as asserting continuity with the church of the Middle Ages.

4. PSM 20 (June 1980).

5. Essentially freehold.

6. Quite separate from Petworth's November fair with which it has often been linked. Petworth fair is older and by prescription rather than charter.

7. Originally the right to free quarter, due from vassal to lord during the latter's periodical circuit. The word would later be used exclusively in the ecclesiastical sense of a pension or food provided by a religious house in this case, of course, the priory. See Compact O.E.D. s.v. corrody.

8. See for instance P. Jerome: *Cloakbag and Common Purse* (1979) chapter 4.

9. Petworth House documents as quoted in PSM 20.

The Fisher Street gala of 1828

Thirty years and more ago (PSM 23 March 1981) I drew attention to Petworth House Archives 78, an exchange of letters between the Third Earl of Egremont and the Rev. John Peachey of Ebernoe about a proposed "boxing match". The Earl rejects any idea of banning the match, even if he had the power to do so, which he doubts, but the correspondence gives no real impression of the magnitude of the event. Mr Stovell (the name is variously spelled) was a banker and entrepreneur living at Daintrey House in East Street, Petworth (see *Tread Lightly Here* (1990) page 66). Whether the Earl's enthusiasm was quite as the report suggests may be a moot point but the event clearly went ahead.

Reprinted in an unidentified newspaper in 1949, this account detailed as it is, seems originally to have been written within a reasonable distance of the event itself.

Pierce Egan is the well-known boxing commentator – a household name at the time. A shandrydan is a "kind of chaise with a hood".

P.

Courtesy of Ivan and Terry Talbot

FISHER STREET GALA

GREATEST CARNIVAL THE PRIZE RING EVER KNEW A MEMORY OF 1828

One of the most remarkable day's sport in the long history of the British prize ring took place at Fisher Street about three miles from Haslemere, on September 23rd 1828.

Edward Neale had agreed to fight John Nicholls, a fair stand-up fight in a four-and-twenty-foot ring, half minute time, within one hundred miles of London, for one hundred pounds a side.

Mr Stovell, a wealthy and eccentric banker, of Petworth, had tendered the men £50, to be equally divided between them, if they would consent to fight at his place in Sussex. The offer had been accepted, and as the momentous day drew near there reached London almost incredible reports of the magnitude of the preparation which Mr Stovell was making for the occasion.

According to these rumours, brought by the drivers and guards of the coaches which passed that way, there was to be a regular gala day at Fisher Street,

including every form of entertainment that was likely to attract the rustic taste.

The whole place was to be en fete, like one of the famous old fashioned fairs. The ladies were to be catered for as well as their lords: there was to be a big dance, and a company of actors from London had been specially retained to perform a popular play in an impromptu theatre. Nothing of the kind on such a scale of magnificence had been seen in the county within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

DISARMING SUSPICION

Perhaps the openness of Mr Stovell's arrangements disarmed suspicion on the part of the magistrates. At any rate, he asked the Earl of Egremont, the most influential nobleman in Sussex, to come and inspect the premises selected for the "jubilee" and my lord was good enough to express his entire approbation of the mode in which Mr Stovell had planned the day's proceedings. Whether the enterprising banker was perfectly candid in his admissions of the nature of the combat between Neale and Nicholls, or whether he simply described it as a boxing competition, leaving the Earl to infer that it was merely a sparring match, as an additional attraction to the entertainments, one is not prepared to say.

All that is certain is that Lord Egremont expressed his unqualified approval of the affair, and, after such an expression of opinion from so high a quarter, it was not likely that any of neighbouring justices of the peace would take upon themselves to fly in the face of his Lordship's verdict, and act upon any suspicion of their own as to the illegality of the show.

On the Monday numbers of the Metropolitan amateurs and members of the prize ring left London by coach. On Tuesday morning, at an early hour, cockneys and countrymen, farmers and their labourers, hardy husbandmen with their rosy wives and daughters were moving in hundreds, some in shandrydans, others in carts, and more trudging sturdily on foot towards the scene of the great treat in store.

ROYAL CYLINDER WORKS

The principal feature of Fisher Street in those days was an immense block of buildings known as the Royal Cylinder Works, formerly a Government gunpowder manufactory, but later purchased by the spirited, but eccentric Mr Stovell, who had an idea of founding an important business there. These extensive premises the sporting banker had devoted to the day's entertainment, and had spared no trouble or expense to render them in every way suitable for the purpose.

It was, no doubt, as a cloak to the real nature of the gathering, that Mr Stovell

announced the affair as a grand "jubilee" and certainly no-one who scanned the preparations would have dreamt that they had been got up purely as accessories to a prize fight. The capacious warehouses and workshop, which had long been unoccupied, were turned into dining rooms, dancing saloons, and places of amusement, including a theatre at which the then popular piece "Tom and Jerry" was announced for representation in the evening under the direction of the distinguished, author Pierce Egan, with Frosty-faced Fogo the licensed jester of the prize ring, in the part of Bob Logis.

To give additional éclat to the proceedings two bands of music were in attendance and constant salutes were fired from a battery of six small cannon planted on a platform of turf in front of the main building. From every available point flags of all colours were flying, and this lavish display of bunting added greatly to the gaiety of the spectacle.

STRIKING SCENE

On entering the lofty gateway of the works, a striking scene met the eyes of the astonished Fanciers from London, who had never witnessed a prize fight conducted on these principles before.

They could hardly believe that all this crowd of people – with flags flying, music playing, acrobats tumbling, Punch and Judy shows, and performing bears, fat females and hungry males swallowing rats to appease their voracious appetites; young folks disporting themselves in merry-go-rounds and swings, old folks enjoying their pipes and mugs of ale - had anything to do with the business of the day. Had they not made a mistake and come to the wrong place?

But their doubts were soon set at rest on this point, for there was Mr Stovell on horseback in the yard, accompanied by two mounted stewards, ready to welcome all comers, and hand them over to the officials on foot, who conducted them to the workshops on the ground floor, that were fitted up with forms and tables for the accommodation of those who desired refreshment, which, in the shape of an ample supply of cold meats with plenty of good ale to wash them down, was supplied gratuitously to all London visitors.

But in planning the arrangements the worthy impresario had not been wholly governed by benevolent motives. He was well aware of the rough character of some of his guests, and had provided for their reception. In one place was a strong room intended as a place of confinement for the disorderly, and in another, in a small pond, was a ducking stool. It was raised and lowered by a pulley and was intended to cool the courage of refractory persons by a wholesome immersion.

RING IN A FIELD

But the appointments of the ring attracted most attention. In a large field, to the right of the Cylinder Works, a half circle of strong stakes, wattles and hurdles, completed a barrier from the hedge next to the road to the walls of the works, so that no person could enter the premises, but by the gates at which authorised officials were stationed to prevent the intrusion of improper characters, and to collect from visitors a sum, generally apportioned to the circumstances of the applicant, to reimburse Mr Stovell for the great expenditure he had incurred.

In the centre of this vast area the twenty-four-foot ring was erected on a piece of ground levelled for the purpose and covered with fresh smooth turf. Close to the ropes, seats were placed for the umpire and referee, and, at a few yards' distance outside a second roped enclosure the representatives of the press were accommodated with chairs. Mr Stovell was indefatigable in superintending the business of the day, assisted by his two stewards, who rode continually about the grounds to see that no disorder arose and upwards of one hundred and fifty stalwart country men, dressed in clean white smocks, wearing blue ribbons in their hats and armed with long staves having short goads at the ends were distributed to act as peace officers.

WOMEN WERE THERE

Before noon some 7,000 or 8,000 persons were assembled in a space which could have held 30,000 comfortably. Among the company, conspicuous by their smart bonnets and bright ribbons, were many well-dressed women, who, after viewing the fight, were to be treated, with their husbands and sweethearts, to a ball and the performance of "Tom and Jerry".

All were on tenterhooks of expectation, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the heroes of the day. It was about a quarter past twelve when Nicholls arrived in a light tax-cart. Ten minutes later Neale came up in dashing style seated in an elegant barouche drawn by four spanking greys.

At twelve minutes to two both men left their corners and went to the centre of the ring. The fight was won by Neale.

After this gladiatorial show had thus been satisfactorily concluded, Mr Stovell hospitably entertained such a dinner as they didn't soon forget. The ball was kept merrily rolling till two o'clock in the morning.

And so ended one of the most remarkably sporting fixtures ever to be recorded. It was a revival of the "Merrie England" of the spacious time of the great Elizabeth and threw quite a halo of medieval romance about the prize ring it had never known before in the memory of any living man.

It takes all sorts

It was certainly all sorts – all sorts of songs, all sorts of dancing, all sorts of jokes, all sorts of costumes.

Lena Hall's Allsorts Review Company launched their new production for our delectation and obvious enjoyment. It was a shame that there was not a packed audience for such an enthusiastic group whose many weeks of rehearsal, property-making, creation of the huge variety of costumes and choreographic arrangements deserves the highest praise.

Their 'trip around the world in song and dance' took us through Denmark, Holland, France, Spain, Switzerland and Italy in the first half. The powerful tenor voice of Charles Wood, the character sketches of Michael Clenshaw, song and dance with Irene Elborn and Claire Bennett, cameo appearances of Freddie Hall and Lena's own vitality and versatility engages the audience from the start. The quick changes of costume demanded of such a small cast, even including the CanCan by a chorus line of two, culminating with an unusual version of 'the splits' drew gasps of surprise and appreciation.

After the interval, it was 'long haul' to the USA, Australia, Egypt, China, Russia and Canada before returning to the UK for songs from Wales, Scotland, Ireland and, finally, London.

More could be said – the tap-dancing was a treat. It would be easy but unfair, to overlook the smoothly flowing continuity ensured by Steve Hall and the untiring accompaniment of Tony Hancock at the keyboard throughout.

It could be said that the decision to put on a Society event on a Saturday was unwise, but predicting an audience has never been easy.

The Allsorts will be back, it's certain.

KCT



George Garland entertains: 1952.
For a description of his yokel act see
Eli and the Tansticker Matches.
PSM 67 March 1992.

